

Remarks

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed March 4, 2004. At the time of the Office Action, claims 1-20 were pending in this application. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-20. By this amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1, 9, and 10 and have canceled claim 6 to clarify the subject matter in which the Applicants claim as their invention and to advance prosecution in this case. The Applicants have also amended the specification and drawings to clarify the subject matter of their invention and to advance prosecution in this case. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments. Applicants do not admit that these amendments were necessary as a result of any cited art or Examiner objection. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the above application in view of the following remarks.

Applicants submit herewith an Information Disclosure Statement, submitting references cited in a foreign search report concerning a foreign counterpart to this Application. The Statement is being filed in compliance with the duty of disclosure, citation is not to be construed as an admission that any of the references are "material" as defined under 37 C.F.R. § 1.56(b).

Objection to drawings under 37 CFR §§ 1.83 and 1.84

The Examiner has objected to the drawings, *i.e.* Figures 1-22, on various grounds. The Examiner states that claimed features, *i.e.* "virtual team room", "team room environment", "teamwork tool server", and "security server" are not depicted on the drawings, in violation of 37 CFR § 1.83(a). Without adding new matter, Applicants have submitted replacement drawings and have amended the specification to obviate the Examiner's objection.

The Examiner objects to the use of reference characters "320" and "350" since they are used to designate more than one feature, in violation of 37 CFR § 1.84(p)(4). Without

adding new matter, Applicants have submitted replacement drawings and have amended the specification to obviate the Examiner's objection.

The Examiner objects to Figures 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8-22 because they fail to show the necessary textual labels of various features, in violation of 37 CFR §§ 1.84(n) and (o). Without adding new matter, Applicants have submitted replacement drawings to obviate the Examiner's rejection.

The Examiner objects to Figures 7-9, 13-14 and 17 because they each contain views that should be labeled separately in accordance with 37 CFR 1.84(u). Without adding new matter, Applicants have submitted replacement drawings to obviate the Examiner's rejection.

Rejection of claims 1-20 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-9 of U.S. Patent No. 6,684,212 (Day). According to the Examiner, although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because they both disclose analogous method for collaborating and managing data from members of separate organizations or multiple networks.

The Examiner's rejection based on obviousness-type double patenting is unsupported by any teachings of the references or other evidence of skill in the art. The Examiner's assertion of equivalence is at best hindsight reasoning based upon Applicants' present teachings. To advance prosecution of this application, withdrawal of this rejection of the claims under the obviousness-type double patenting rejection is solicited.

Nevertheless, Applicants enclose herein a Terminal Disclaimer over the '212 patent. The filing of the Terminal Disclaimer to obviate the rejection based on

obviousness-type double patenting is not an admission by the Applicants of the propriety of the rejection. As consistent with the decision in *Quad Environmental Technologies Corp. v. Union Sanitary District*, 946 F.2d 870 (Fed. Cir. 1991), the “filing of a terminal disclaimer simply serves the statutory function of removing the rejection of double patenting, and raises neither a presumption nor estoppel on the merits of the rejection.”

**Rejection of claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)
as being unpatentable over *Tatham***

Claims 1-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,223,177 (*Tatham*). Applicants presume that the Examiner meant to reject claims 1-9 under § 102(e) since the Examiner’s detailed analysis is limited to these claims. In any event, Applicants believe that all claims, pending as of the March 4, 2004 Office Action, are patentable over *Tatham* and the other art of record.

Notwithstanding, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 10 to clarify their claimed invention in light of *Tatham* and the other art of record. As amended, claim 1 recites a method of collaborating among team members of separate diverse organizations over a first network and a second electronic network. The diverse organization include first members of a first organization and second members of a second organization from the first members. Claim 1 recites providing a virtual team environment in which team rooms can be defined within the environment for carrying out a plurality of activities associated with a project roadmap. As amended, claim 10 recites a method of providing communication among organizationally disparate team members. Claim 10 recites providing a teamwork tool server supporting a team room environment including one or more activities for which communication and collaboration among team members is provided. Claim 10 also recites providing a local directory including a team room user profile for each of a plurality of team room members and defined by the one or more activities. As described below, the above-identified claims are patentable over the art of record.

Tatham does not teach, disclose, or suggest a method for providing multi-level collaborative environment for diverse organizational interaction, as recited in claim 1. *Tatham* provides for a localized, private office suite with application software required to permit group activity within the office. Col. 4, ll. 25-27. For example, *Tatham* does not teach, disclose, or suggest defining a team room within a virtual team room environment, as recited in claim 1. The Applicants have recognized that the creation of such an environment is conducive to collaboration among team members of separate organizations. In support of this objective, claim 1 also recites other method steps that are not provided by *Tatham*, which include associating a plurality of the first members and a plurality of the second members with the team room, defining a plurality of activities associated with a project roadmap, and receiving data from the first team members and the second team members via the virtual team room environment. Notably, *Tatham* does not contemplate the level of detail recited by claim 1 with respect to defining activities in the context of a project road map. For at least these reasons, claim 1 and depending claim 2-5 and 7-9, are patentable over *Tatham* and the other art of record.

Per the Examiner's admission, *Tatham* does not teach, disclose, or suggest claim 10. According to the Examiner, *Tatham* fails to teach verifying the identity of a user and permitting access to the team room environment if the profile matches a given user who has permission. Office Action of March 4, 2004, Page 10. For at least this reason, claim 10 and depending claims 11-20 are patentable over *Tatham*.

Rejection of claims 1-20 under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Tatham* in further view of *Thackston*

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Tatham* in view of *Thackston*. Applicants kindly request reconsideration of the pending claims because the proposed *Tatham-Thackston* combination fails to teach, disclose, or suggest various features of the pending claims.

Assuming that the Examiner has shown proper motivation to combine the *Tatham* and *Thackson* references, an assumption that the Applicants do not necessarily agree with, the proposed *Tatham-Thackson* combination fails to teach, disclose, or suggest the method recited in claim 1, as amended. The proposed combination does not teach, disclose, or suggest “defining a team room within the virtual team room environment,” as recited in claim 1. *Tatham* is directed at primarily intranet-based collaborative software systems. Col. 4, ll. 1-2. *Tatham* “permit[s] group activity within the office.” Col. 4, ll. 26-27. *Tatham* does not contemplate “defining a team room within the virtual team room environment” since it is not necessary to achieve the goal of group activity within the office, whereas the Applicants invention as recited in claim 1 addresses collaboration “among team members of separate diverse organizations.”

Other limitations of claim 1 also permit this type of diverse collaboration, which is not provided by *Tatham*’s localized system. For instance, *Tatham* does not teach, disclose, or suggest associating a plurality of the first members and a plurality of the second members with the team room; or defining a plurality of activities associated with a project roadmap; or receiving data from the first team members and the second team members via the virtual team room environment.

The *Thackson* reference does not cure the defective teachings of *Tatham*. *Thackson* is limited to providing a “system and method for undertaking an engineering design and development effort in a virtual collaborative environment.” Col. 1, ll. 19-24. For example, the *Thackson* system can be used by “a prime contractor [to] initiate[] a development project” (Col. 18, ll. 54-56) and for other focused projects with team members from homogeneous engineering groups. *Thackson* does not contemplate methodology for providing a collaborative work environment among team members of separate diverse organizations. As such, *Thackson* does not teach, disclose, or suggest various features of claim 1, as amended. For example, *Thackson* does not teach, disclose, or suggest defining a team room within the virtual team room environment; or defining a plurality of activities associated with a project

roadmap. For at least these reasons, claim 1 and depending claim 2-5 and 7-9, are patentable over the proposed *Tatham-Thackson* combination and the other art of record.

Assuming that the Examiner has shown proper motivation to combine the *Tatham* and *Thackson* references, an assumption that the Applicants do not necessarily agree with, the proposed *Tatham-Thackson* combination fails to teach, disclose, or suggest the method recited in claim 10, as amended. The Examiner admits that *Tatham* fails to teach verifying the identity of a user and permitting access to the team room environment if the profile matches a given user who has permission, as recited in original and amended claim 10. Office Action of March 4, 2004, Page 10. The *Thackson* reference does not cure the defective teachings of *Tatham*. At best, *Thackson* provides a collaborative system specifically geared towards engineering design and development. As a result, *Thackson* does not provide various features of claim 10, which is directed at a “method of providing communication and collaboration among [organizationally disparate] team members.” For example, *Thackson* does not teach, disclose, or suggest “providing a local directory ... including a team user profile ... defined by one or more activities,” as recited in amended claim 10. The team user profile is utilized to permit access to the team room environment by team members. Since the profile is activity-defined, team members from disparate organizations can have their access limited based on the activities or projects associated with their work. For at least these reasons, claim 10 and depending claims 11-20 are patentable over the proposed *Tatham-Thackson* combination.

Conclusion

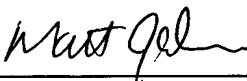
For the foregoing reasons, Applicants believe that the Office Action of March 4, 2004 has been fully responded to. Consequently, in view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully submitted.

If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the Examiner is invited to contact Matthew M. Jakubowski, Attorney for Applicants, at Examiner's convenience at (248) 358-4400.

Although no fees are believed due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee or credit any overpayment in connection with this filing to Deposit Account No. 06-1510 (Ford Global Technologies, Inc.). A duplicate of this notice is enclosed for this purpose.

Respectfully submitted,

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